

Remote Teaching Memorandum of Understanding -- Summary FAQ

The Boston Teachers Union and the Boston Public Schools have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding the working conditions of union members during the period of school closures.

The agreement is located [here](#). Below is a plain-English Q&A of the most important requirements for educators as they plan out the remainder of their remote work-year. This FAQ represents the Union's best understanding of the document, which has just been signed, but not yet fully implemented. We will revise this FAQ as events dictate.

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School Year

Q: When is school going to open back up?

A: This MOU does not specify a date for reopening schools, as that decision depends on rapidly-shifting data from the pandemic. But this MOU does apply for as long as the school closure continues or to the end of June whichever occurs first.

Remote Work Expectations

Q: What does the "remote school day" look like?

A: Our MOU states, "Each school shall create an age-appropriate student remote learning schedule, with teacher input, that provides for student instruction or student facing time for at least three hours per day, preferably between the hours of 9:00-12:00 and/or 1:00-4:00." In other words, students will have an opportunity to connect with an available educator from their school for at least 3 hours of each day. Teachers have input on the schedule to provide that opportunity for students, but we do not have final say, nor do we have complete responsibility for creating that schedule. One teacher alone is not responsible for three consecutive hours.

Q: I'm a classroom teacher. (Grades K0-12, including specialists) What specifically do I have to do?

A: Our MOU says, "Teachers *may* be required to engage in 15 hours of synchronous time directed by the principal, with input from teachers, and an additional 5 hours of asynchronous time directed by the individual teacher, with input from the principal. These 20 hours can include student facing time such as direct instruction, office hours, morning meetings, one on one instruction or meetings with colleagues, staff meetings, professional development."
(Emphasis supplied)

This means that each week, your principal CAN BUT NEED NOT require you to be doing real-time interactive work for 15 hours per week. 15 hours per week of Zoom meetings (with kids OR colleagues) is the maximum that can be required.

Q: Synchronous? Asynchronous? Student-facing? What do these words even mean?

A: **Synchronous time is defined in our MOU:** "opportunities to engage in real time with another person that is not in the same physical location as the employee (e.g. on a call/zoom/chat)."

Asynchronous time is defined in our MOU: "work that the employee can do without the real time participation of another person."

Student-facing time is defined in our MOU: "include, but not be limited to, student-centered activities including small groups, one-to-one instruction, and online office hours for responding to student questions and to help direct student learning."

Let's break that down:

Types of work	Examples that are Student-Facing Synchronous Time	Examples that are Asynchronous Time
Teaching and giving feedback	<p>Helping a student in a document <u>while the student is in the same document.</u></p> <p>Teaching on screen in front of students in real time. (You can later post any videos or other material you use in class for students who could not attend.) <i>Self made, pre-recorded videos offered to students DO count, too.</i></p> <p>Meeting with a student on the phone, via live chat (video, text, or other) to talk about their work.</p>	Writing or recording feedback to students in bed at 10 p.m. for them to read/view tomorrow.

Responding to student questions	Being available in office hours for students to come ask for help. Engaging with a student on the phone call or via live-chat (video, text, or other) to answer their questions.	Responding to a student who emailed a question.
Connecting with students	Meeting in advisories or checking in with a student on the phone, via live chat (video, text, or other)	Logging student engagement in Aspen, documentation

Types of work	Examples that are Synchronous Time with Colleagues or Families	Examples that are Asynchronous Time
Working with Colleagues	Staff meetings and PLCs	Sending emails back and forth with colleagues.
Planning	Co-planning and creating materials with colleagues or your supervisor in a meeting over chat or Zoom.	Planning the lesson and creating materials to go with the lesson by yourself.
Connecting with Families	Check-ins with families on the phone or via chat (video, text, or other)	Sending announcements to all families
Special Education	Attending virtual IEP meetings and Professional Development	Data entry or special education paperwork. Writing IEP reports

Q: Won't I have to spend WAY more than 5 hours per week in asynchronous work?

A: We don't think so. You must give your principal "input" on how you spend 5 of them. ("Input" is NOT the same as "approval" or a veto.) The cap is on mandated work, not voluntary activities and much of the work that needs to be done can be done synchronously, too.

Q: What other mandated expectations are there?

A.: Our MOU says, "every three days... each educator shall be assigned a group of students up to their class size maximum. Educators shall work collaboratively to communicate substantively with their assigned class of students regularly throughout the week. Communications should include a personal check-in and, when appropriate, academic/professional conversation and feedback. Communication can include phone, video or substantive academic exchange in writing; video cannot be required. Keep a log of communications that is shared with administrators and any concerns are noted as soon as possible.

In other words, you will be responsible for contacting a group of students no larger than a typical class size for that grade level every three days. Keep a log and share it. The goal here is to make sure we know how our students are doing. Are they safe and healthy and learning?

Other key requirements are:

- **Consistently monitor your BPS email and be in touch with your supervisor as directed**
 - **Respond within a reasonable time, usually within one work day**
- **By May 15, complete up to 5 hours of BPS-provided PD on remote learning as directed by your supervisor. Those who already completed such PD after the school closure are, we believe, entitled to credit towards satisfaction of this requirement. We are seeking confirmation.**

Q: Are we taking attendance and grading?

A: Our MOU says, teachers will “Track student engagement daily, record student engagement weekly as attendance in ASPEN...Complete and input grading of student work through March 16th. The parties agree to continue discussions around the subject of a district-wide remote learning grading policy.”

This means that you have to update Aspen every week, but that “attendance” during a school closure is really evidence of engagement. Grading information will come out soon. For now this is all we have; just complete grades up to March 16.

Q: I’m a paraprofessional. What do I have to do?

A: **Required synchronous hours for paras are a maximum of 10, with 5 additional asynchronous.**

Q: Can I be required to teach a small class as a para?

A: **No. Your role is still to assist in teaching, not to become a teacher. If you used to run small groups in a class with the teacher, then you might join a “breakout room” on Zoom, but you can not be asked to host your own real-time lessons.**

Q: I’m not a classroom teacher, nor a para. Where can I learn about my specific remote learning requirements?

A: **Here’s a quick break-down of the other specific employee groups in the MOU.**

Group	Requirements
Sign-language interpreters	Work with principal to create a schedule, participate in staff meetings, you will provided with appropriate PD and technology for remote interpretation

ABAs	Work with OSE to develop a schedule for providing services with no more than 20 total synchronous hours per week. Please see MOU for additional details on asynchronous responsibilities.
Social workers, psychologists and clinicians	15 hours of synchronous time and 5 additional hours of asynchronous time with input of your principal. Set up and run weekly counseling as allowed by law. Please see MOU for additional details on asynchronous responsibilities.
Related Service Providers	Work with OSE to develop a schedule for providing services with no more than 20 total synchronous hours per week. Please see MOU for additional details on asynchronous responsibilities.
COSE	Work with OSE to develop a schedule for providing services with no more than 20 total synchronous hours per week. Please see MOU for additional details on asynchronous responsibilities.
LATFs	Complete FY21 EL Title I Budget Plan. Please see MOU for additional details on asynchronous responsibilities.
Research and assessment specialists	Call and log calls to families to cancel existing appointments. Please see MOU for details on responsibilities.
Assignment specialists	Make phone calls to necessary departments and families re: assignment questions, including exam schools. Attend any PDs and/or staff meetings. Please see MOU for additional details on asynchronous responsibilities.
Transportation Officers	Continue routing and scheduling students from home through your BPS issued laptop. Participate in conference calls twice weekly. Communicate with the supervisor and others as necessary.
Nurses	Complete data entry in student records in SNAP, to the extent possible. Create individualized healthcare plans. Continue to monitor and check in with high risk students and their families. Participate in PD. Please see MOU for additional details on asynchronous responsibilities and for guidance on nurses who choose to volunteer with BPHC or another BPS approved health care provider
Coverage Nurses	Work in teams of 2 to 3 on chapters of Policy & Procedure Manual. Attend virtual check-ins as necessary. Please see MOU for additional details on asynchronous responsibilities and for guidance on nurses who choose to volunteer with BPHC or another BPS approved health care provider

Q: What if I can't make it to a staff meeting?

A: Our MOU says, “If an employee provides notice that he or she cannot attend a scheduled meeting, the host shall make a good faith effort to post notes from the meeting for later review. Notice of required meetings shall be provided at least three work days in advance, including via a regular schedule.”

You get advance notice, but if you can't make it, you are responsible to catch up on the posted notes from the meeting.

Compensation and Benefits

Q: Will we lose pay this year?

A: NO. Regular pay and benefits continue for all active members, but there is an exception of substitutes, who by the nature of their jobs don't always work continuously. Substitutes will continue to be paid in the manner in which they have been paid since March 16.

Q: What about stipends? If I get stipended to do ILT, do I still get paid?

A: If you continue to do the work for which you were being stipended before closure, you will continue to be stipended for that work. Although there is no requirement of documentation, BTU recommends you keep track of the time spent by you on stipended activities to avoid disputes over whether you are continuing to do the stipended work.

Q: What about coaches of Spring sports?

A: They will receive ½ of their pay for the work they have already done. If further work is required from coaches during the closure or if some version of the season exists later, pay for that will be negotiated.

Educator Evaluations

Q: What's happening with evaluations and artifacts in TeachPoint?

A: Our MOU says, “BPS will place the formal performance evaluation process on hold during the extended school closure, except that educators and evaluators may upload artifacts if they choose to do so. Evaluators will continue supervision of staff through available means for observation and feedback, including a summary memo that shall be uploaded to educator plans in lieu of DESE ratings (as a non-evaluative artifact) at the end of the closure period. The educator shall have 14 calendar days to respond after the memo has been posted.”

Evaluations are suspended. You can keep uploading artifacts for when we resume, and so can your evaluator, but you will not receive any ratings during the school closure. When the school closure ends, your evaluator will instead write up a summary of your work during the closure. This summary will not include a rating and is not part of an evaluation.